



RACIAL AND ETHNIC APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

"Before the Alabama REACH 2010 project came to my community, I was afraid to even say the word "cancer." Perhaps I was afraid because, as a child, I had seen so many relatives die of cancer. When I was asked to attend the REACH training program, I saw a chance to learn more about the "C" word. Now that I've been a community health advisor for the past 4 years, I can boldly say that cancer is not a death sentence because there are resources and help available. Now, I'm telling everyone I know about the program that changed my life!"

—Community health advisor

REACHing African American Women in Rural Alabama

Who We Are

The University of Alabama at Birmingham coordinates the Alabama REACH 2010 Breast and Cervical Cancer Coalition (ABCCC).

- The ABCCC includes an array of partners, such as community groups, state and national organizations, health care providers, and researchers.
- The ABCCC is working to eliminate disparities in breast and cervical cancer among African American women by promoting awareness of and access to prevention and screening services.
- The coalition serves women in two urban and six rural counties in Alabama, in an area known as the Black Belt.

The Problem

- Breast cancer is diagnosed less often in African American women than white women, but more African American women die of this disease each year.
- Cervical cancer is diagnosed more often in African American women than white women, and more African American women die of this disease each year.

The Solution

- The ABCCC created a community action plan to address the barriers that prevent African American women aged 40 or older from receiving breast and cervical cancer screening services.
- Action plan activities include
 - 1) creating a core working group of lay volunteers, church representatives, and health professionals in each targeted county;
 - 2) awarding mini-grants to nonprofit groups that target breast and cervical cancer screening;
 - 3) conducting outreach activities to assess screening status and promote future screenings; and
 - 4) distributing educational materials.
- Other action plan activities include promoting the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) is a community-based public health program funded by CDC to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities.

www.cdc.gov/reach

(a free screening program funded by CDC) and helping women get to their screening appointments by visiting, calling, and sending reminders.

Our Achievements

- During 2001–2003, the ABCCC launched an intervention to increase breast and cervical cancer screening among African American women in the target counties.
- In 2002, self-reported baseline data showed that only 48% of women participating in this intervention had received a mammogram. Within 2 years, 62% reported having a mammogram.
- Also in 2002, 55% of participating women said they had previously received a Pap test. Within 2 years of the intervention, 66% had received a Pap test.
- Before the ABCCC intervention, a 17% disparity in mammography screening existed between African American and white women in the target counties. During 2001–2003, this disparity decreased to 11%.



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Mobilizing Community Resources

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB); University of Alabama; Western Kentucky University; Markey Cancer Center; Tuskegee University, National Center for Bioethics; Alabama Cooperative Extension System; Alabama Department of Public Health, Office of Minority Health; Community Care Network; American Cancer Society; National Black Church Family Council; SISTAs Can Survive; Mineral District Medical Society; Tuskegee Area Health Education Center; B & D Cancer Care Center; Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation; Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program; Maude L. Whatley Health Services; UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center; UAB Minority Health and Research Center.

Our Future

The ABCCC will continue to 1) increase women's awareness and use of breast and cervical cancer screening services in Alabama, 2) work with existing partners and project supporters and add new coalition members, 3) refer eligible women to the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, 4) share our research findings with the community, and 5) educate stakeholders about the REACH program and its efforts to eliminate health disparities in breast and cervical cancer.

Getting the Word Out Locally

- "Alabama REACH 2010," 30-minute documentary video.
- "Governor's Black Belt Action Commission," health committee press release, June 21, 2005.
- "Promoting Cancer Awareness in the African American Community," WIAT Channel 42 News, April 20, 2002.
- "Development of a Community Action Plan to Combat Breast and Cervical Cancer: An Overview of the Alabama

REACH 2010 Project," WAKA Channel 8 News, April 18, 2001.

Generating New and Exciting Science

- "Addressing Disparities Through Coalition Building: Alabama REACH 2010 Lessons Learned." *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 2006;17(2, suppl): S55–S77.
- "A Community-Driven Action Plan to Eliminate Breast and Cervical Cancer Disparity: Successes and Limitations." *Journal of Cancer Education* 2006; 21(suppl):S91–S100.
- "The Development of a Community Action Plan to Reduce Breast and Cervical Cancer Disparities Between African American and White Women." *Ethnicity & Disease* 2004;14 (3, suppl 1):54–62.
- "REACH 2010: A Unique Opportunity to Create Strategies to Eliminate Health Disparities Among Women of Color." *American Journal of Health Studies* 2001;17(2):93–106.

Keys to Lasting Change in the African American Community

To make the Alabama REACH 2010 project a success, we worked to empower residents to be their own health advocates and to build community capacity by training residents to serve as community health advisors.

We also were able to create a sense of ownership for the project by drawing on community groups and a core working group of volunteers to create and implement the community action plan. In addition, we adopted the principles of community-based participatory research, which is designed to involve researchers, organizations, and community members as equal partners in all aspects of the research process.

These activities led to the creation of a unified and motivated coalition. We were able to see results above and beyond our expectations because of mutual collaboration and trust between our coalition and community volunteers.

REACH FOR MORE INFORMATION



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